General Assembly

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Sixty-second session
Agenda item 116

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/62/L.51)*]

62/277. System-wide coherence

The General Assembly,

Recalling the consensus 2005 World Summit Outcome,[1]

Recalling also its consensus resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007 on the triennial comprehensive policy review,

Commending the pragmatic, transparent, balanced and inclusive approach taken by the Co-Chairs of the consultative follow-up process by the General Assembly on system-wide coherence, the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations, to their work on behalf of the Assembly, which built upon the efforts of their distinguished predecessors, the Permanent Representatives of Barbados and Luxembourg to the United Nations, at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly,

Having considered the paper on "Institutional options to strengthen United Nations work on gender equality and the empowerment of women", which the Deputy Secretary-General provided to the President of the General Assembly on 23 July 2008 in response to a consensus request from Member States,

Looking forward to the independent evaluation foreseen in its resolution 62/208, which will help it to form a comprehensive view of the "Delivering as one" approach to the provision of development assistance through the United Nations system and, in the meantime, acknowledging the interim assessment of progress made and challenges remaining in this regard, as contained in the "Maputo Declaration",[2] issued in May 2008 by a number of least developed and middle income countries which have voluntarily embraced this approach,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence[3] and the report of the Secretary-General containing his comments thereon;[4]

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[1] See resolution 60/1.

[2] See A/63/85-E/2008/83.

[3] See A/61/583.

[4] A/61/836.

2. *Welcomes* the report presented by the Co-Chairs of the consultative follow-up process by the General Assembly on system-wide coherence, the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations, to the President of the General Assembly on 21 July 2008,[5] the conclusions and recommendations of which are contained in the annex to the present resolution;

3. *Decides*, accordingly, that the continuing and deepening intergovernmental work of the General Assembly on system-wide coherence will focus exclusively and in an integrated manner on "Delivering as one" at country and regional levels, harmonization of business practices, funding, governance, and gender equality and the empowerment of women;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, drawing on the resources and expertise of the United Nations system and building on the outcome of its triennial comprehensive policy review, to provide to Member States substantive papers on the issues of funding and governance, as those issues arise in the context of system-wide coherence, with a view to facilitating substantive action by the General Assembly during the sixty-third session;

5. *Welcomes*, in this overall context, the paper on "Institutional options to strengthen United Nations work on gender equality and the empowerment of women", which the Deputy Secretary-General provided to the President of the General Assembly on 23 July 2008, and requests the Secretary-General to provide a further, detailed modalities paper in respect of the options set out in the Deputy Secretary-General's paper, covering funding, governance structure, staffing, specific functions, relationship with the Commission on the Status of Women and other relevant bodies and, having regard to the totality of views expressed by Member States in informal plenary consultations on 8 September 2008, focusing in particular on the "composite entity" option with a view to facilitating substantive action by the General Assembly during the sixty-third session;

6. *Resolves*, at the conclusion of its entire process on system-wide coherence, to review and take stock of all of its prior actions and deliberations in a single resolution or decision.

122nd plenary meeting
15 September 2008

Annex

Conclusions and recommendations of the Co-Chairs of the consultative follow-up process by the General Assembly on system-wide coherence, the Permanent Representatives of Ireland and the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations

1. As the Co-Chairs for system-wide coherence at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly we have sought to conduct an open, transparent, balanced and inclusive process of consultations among the entire membership. Our aim has been to present a report that, by and large, will sit well with all parts of the Assembly in that all groupings of States should be able to feel that the report addresses seriously

[5] See A/63/362.

many of their principal priorities and concerns. In this way we have sought to facilitate a balanced and fair compromise outcome to the deliberations of the Assembly during the sixty-second session.

2. The following conclusions and recommendations flow from the present report overall, but are perhaps best seen in tandem with the introductory section. The landmark 2006 report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence,[5] while a very important contribution to the work of the General Assembly to increase coherence across the United Nations system, did not launch that work. The Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit as well as consensus positions of the Assembly, not least the triennial comprehensive policy reviews, constitute much of the bedrock for building further progress in this area.

3. Since the outset of the sixty-second session, the broad membership has signalled that the continuing efforts on system-wide coherence should focus on four priority areas, namely (*a*) the United Nations delivering as one at the country level with the related aspect of harmonization of business practices; (*b*) funding; (*c*) governance; and (*d*) gender equality and the empowerment of women.

4. The present report should be taken together with the paper on gender (in its institutional dimension) which is being provided by the Secretary-General to Member States in response to their request of 16 June 2008.[6]

5. As for "Delivering as one", we have sought to provide the Member States with an accurate and up-to-date picture of the process as it is actually developing on the ground in upwards of thirty developing countries and not simply as it is perceived from afar. We have been helped in this by our on-the-ground consultations with Heads of State and Government, Cabinet ministers, parliamentarians, United Nations country teams, development partners and others in some eight developing countries. We have also conferred at length with United Nations agency heads in New York, Geneva, Rome, Paris and Vienna. We have taken careful note of the "Maputo Declaration" issued in May 2008 by pilot and other developing countries, in which they formally request the Assembly to encourage them in the "Delivering as one" approach that they have voluntarily embraced in partnership with the United Nations system.

6. Our conclusion is that the experience of "Delivering as one" to date (that is to say, halfway through its second year) at the country level is clearly and preponderantly positive, even if a number of challenges remain to be fully addressed in regard to each of the "four ones". We note that this view is shared by the large and growing number of developing countries which are applying the "Delivering as one" approach and proactively moving towards implementing the consensus resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review. They state that important principles are in fact being observed in practice, including national ownership and leadership and "no one size fits all". Through the "Delivering as one" approach United Nations country team activities are being aligned to an unprecedented degree with the national development strategies and policies of the developing countries concerned. Assistance is being delivered with greater effectiveness, savings are being realized and greater reductions in transaction costs are clearly in prospect.

7. At the same time the picture that emerges at present is interim in nature since the independent evaluation of "Delivering as one", as foreseen by the 2007 triennial

[6] The paper on "Institutional options to strengthen United Nations work on gender equality and the empowerment of women" was provided on 23 July 2008.

comprehensive policy review, will come only towards the end of 2009 and, in any event, concrete development outputs arising from a new way of doing business take longer than eighteen months to emerge definitively.

8. It seems to us clear that the Assembly ought to be in a position during the sixty-second session to give a positive political impetus to "Delivering as one", thereby giving encouragement to those many developing countries which have voluntarily embraced this approach, and to enjoin the United Nations development system to continue to pursue it. Moving forward, it will be essential to safeguard the principles underlying "Delivering as one", in particular that of enhancing national ownership and leadership in the design and implementation of United Nations development system support programmes at the country level. The international community should by the same token be encouraged to continue to respond positively through additional commitments where the combination of strong national leadership and an empowered United Nations country team, delivering as one, together generate a better-aligned and more effective United Nations programme of support.

9. For the most part, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the system, at the leadership level, have gradually become increasingly engaged with and supportive of the "Delivering as one" approach. The atmosphere in which they collaborate within the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General has been transformed for the better as they and their collaborators continue consideration of the implications of the "four ones" (one programme, one budgetary framework and fund, one leader and one office) at the country level. At the same time, it is to be recommended that headquarters levels across the system empower the respective country-level agency representatives with much greater latitude, flexibility and encouragement to advance a more coherent and therefore more effective delivery of United Nations system assistance on the ground in line with the "Delivering as one" approach.

10. In all of this, the particular situations affecting middle-income countries should receive adequate attention.

11. Turning to the issue of funding in the context of system-wide coherence, there clearly need to be greater flows of and greater predictability in funding. In general, overall commitments made solemnly and repeatedly need to be implemented more faithfully. Commendation is due to those development partners which have made concrete contributions to advancing the "Delivering as one" approach at the country level in response to the strategies, priorities, policies and plans of the developing countries concerned. At the same time, support for "Delivering as one" at the country level must not be at the expense of core funding to agencies through their headquarters. Overall, there needs to be a significantly improved balance between core and non-core funding. Funds, programmes and specialized agencies should be invited, if necessary through changes in statute, rules and/or regulations, to give effect to the consensus view in the General Assembly that savings realized at the country level ought to be ploughed back into programmatic development work in the countries where the savings are realized. In this and in other ways, "Delivering as one" must deliver more.

12. As for intergovernmental governance at the central level, we have detected no palpable appetite in the General Assembly for establishing new intergovernmental bodies, including the putative Sustainable Development Board which was recommended by the High-level Panel. At the same time the new realities emerging

from a growing number of developing countries applying the "Delivering as one" approach at the country level will need to be accommodated and addressed more effectively by the existing boards and not least by the Economic and Social Council. In the light of the ongoing and emerging nature of the "Delivering as one" approach, it may be necessary to continue and to deepen discussion of these issues during the sixty-third session.

13. If, in that context, the Assembly focuses first on the functions that need to be discharged centrally and intergovernmentally in the "Delivering as one" approach, it will perhaps then be easier to address the question of which institutions, as these continue to adapt, are best placed to discharge the functions in question.

14. We also believe that the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions ought to be consistently encouraged to develop, in a pragmatic manner, a far greater degree of cooperation and collaboration in the context described in the present report. Some progress is already being made. This needs to be developed and enlarged.

15. As for gender equality and the empowerment of women, we recommend that the Assembly be invited to address the matter, including in the light of the Secretary-General's paper on the institutional dimension,[6] in open, informal plenary consultations at an early opportunity, perhaps early in September. During the sixty-second session the Member States have advanced together, by agreement, in their consideration of the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment. With assistance from the Secretary-General, they have identified critical gaps in the way the system assists Member States in implementing globally agreed mandates and their own internationally made commitments in this area. With further open and genuine discussion the Assembly may be in a position, before the conclusion of its sixty-second session, to signal in general terms, but nevertheless clearly, which institutional option or combination of options, perhaps with adjustments, it wishes to pursue. Detailed working through of such an agreed approach could then be taken up and completed at the sixty-third session. We have the very strong impression that no Government, whether for substantive or "tactical" reasons, would wish to stand in the way of a consensus to advance the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of women through a measured but significant step forward.

16. We believe that in the light of the present report and the Secretary-General's options paper on gender equality and the empowerment of women (in its institutional aspect)[6] Member States ought to be equipped for decision-making during the sixty-second session. With these substantive elements in hand, Member States are also better placed to weigh the format of the decision-making of the Assembly.

17. In the first instance, and on the basis of the foregoing report and these conclusions, Member States may, during the sixty-second session, wish to address, perhaps in a package decision, the four core priority areas listed in paragraph 3 above, which they have highlighted throughout.

18. The same decision could signal that henceforth, in the context of intergovernmental discussion on system-wide coherence, the Assembly will focus exclusively on these priority areas and will exclude from this context the issues of environment/environmental governance, humanitarian assistance and human rights, in line with the considerations set out in the present report.